1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahir MR13
Silwa

older sibling, he is expected to do so, and take his turn. So practically every grown-up member of the family goes through almost the same farming stages and hence there is no specialization in any particular farm task. Friction sometimes occurs between brothers, because of gaps in this process of training, as in the case of a brother who has been working in town at an early age returning to the village to work with his family. He would resent, for instance, fetching the fertilizer from the hill, while his older brother might expect him to take over this task. In the same way, boys who had been sent by their fathers to the Kuttab to memorize the Koran till the age of fourteen or fifteen would find it difficult to adapt themselves to the cycles of agricultural work. In a few cases the performing of the appropriate tasks according to age and ability has led fathers to give each of their married sons a separate piece of land to cultivate for himself, as if they were leasing the land, the father getting one-third of the crop.

In spite of the fact that between the ages of five and twelve there is a certain amount of overlapping in the tasks of both boys and girls in the home, yet the sexual dichotomy in work is definitely established about the age of twelve. Even at an earlier stage, when the girl takes the food to the field or takes a basketful of grass to the sheep, she is only allowed to remain at the edge of it by the canal. If she ever entertains the idea of touching the implements or playing with the water, her father or brothers immediately shout at her 'Leave it! Get off the land or away from the water!' After the age of thirteen, the girls' errands are confined to the neighbourhood and they work more inside the dwelling. They are encouraged to go out for water-fetching only after sunset, when all men have returned home from work. The agricultural road leading from the village to the Nile is monopolized at night, specially on moonlit nights, by adolescent girls and women going to the Nile to fill their water-jars.

In discussing the productive activities in the village, the incentives for work must be mentioned. It is hardly necessary to stress the fact that the drive for food, and for sufficient supply of it, is one of the basic motives for work. With the small landholdings there is hardly any other alternative but to grow crops which yield the major substance of their food consumption, bread, whether wheat, barley or millet, constituting the bulk of food intake in any meal. It is believed that bread made out of home-grown crops is more lasting and sufficing than that made out of seeds bought at the market, as there is more 'baraka'—holiness and sufficiency—in the former kind. Even those few farmers with comparatively large-sized farms who have recently taken up the cultivation of cash crops like cotton and sugar-cane, still reserve the major part of their land for corn. Security of food supply depends on growing seeds as the only way of subsistence. 'From where are you going to eat?' is a question invariably asked by the villagers of any of them who entertains the idea of growing cotton on his small farm.

As it is, the various crops have different security and prestige values/

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

attached to them. Millet is the source of food for almost eight months, extending from September to April. The same applies to barley, which is the food crop during summer. Wheat bread is a delicacy enjoyed now and again, and usually connected with festival and religious occasions. It is also the crop that provides mainly the substance, with the addition of chicken or pigeons, of mutual food gifts on events of marriage, birth and circumcision, as well as the bread that is to be offered to guests. It is also wheat that is normally sold in the market, or exchanged for goods in the shop. Hence the season for weddings and circumcision ceremonies falls only after the harvest of wheat, when it is abundant in the village. More than in any other seed, the villagers are deeply interested in the price of wheat. The price of wheat is the first topic a villager returning from town will discuss with his people who will be all too eager to listen. In an often-heard argument between a cloth-merchant and a farmer, the latter, in attempting to reduce the price of the cloth, will retort to the merchant, 'Do you know how much wheat is worth?'

In connection with food, the writer recalls a tentative suggestion to one of the villagers that one could have a meal without bread, to which the horrified man immediately replied, 'There is no Strength, nor Might save with Allah! May God preserve this bliss for us.' He then enquired how one could get filled without bread. 'Certainly, bulkiness is one of the main things in a satisfactory meal, and nothing is more filling than loaves of bread.'

Bread is not only filling, but also possesses an aura of sacredness, being believed to be the essence of life. The name given to bread is 'aish' which literally means life. It is profane to put bread on the ground, and every effort must be made to pick up any crumb that falls to the ground for fear of it being trodden on.[1] Bread, like written words on paper, which might contain something from the Koran, must be respected. Before mother sweeps the house, children go looking for pieces or crumbs of bread or bits of paper with writing on them, and either give them to birds or goats in the former case or put them in the fire in the case of paper. Children are also enjoined to kiss bread if it falls from their hands on the ground, and if they find it lying in the street to remove it into a crevice in the wall. They are punished if they throw bread from their hands when angry or annoyed, as this might make the 'baraka' fly from the house.

Another deep incentive for work is the desire to emulate and attract social approval. The belief of the villager that nobody, at least in his village, is intrinsically better than any other person, gives him a feeling that all are equal. The strength of the impulse for emulation is clearly expressed in some of their often-repeated maxims: 'Without emulation the world would not have been populated and developed', 'Even com-

[1] Something similar to this has been mentioned by E. W. Lane, which he describes as 'The excessive and unreasonable respect of the Egyptians for bread', *Manners and Customs*, p. 290.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

FOLK LIFE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE

Notions connected with life and death are, on the whole, mixed up with religion. To die on holy days, such as Fridays or in the month of Ramadan, is a sign of God's blessing.

Sanctity shows itself also in status and rank and their role in the community. According to the villagers, the 'ashraf' (people of distinguished descent being related to the Prophet) have a better chance of salvation than others, a notion which, of course, satisfies the villagers' ego as they consider themselves descendants of the Prophet. The persistence of the religious prerogatives of the 'ashraf' goes to show that the central conception of Islam in the equality of all believers has not entirely supplanted the Arab reverence for distinguished genealogy.

The villagers' attitude of respect for religious men is based on two principles. The first is that of knowledge of Koranic studies, combined with observation of religious duties; the second is derived from hereditary piety, as recognized piety is believed to be handed from father to son. The example of the two pious men acknowledged and venerated as such by the villagers is perhaps the best illustration. One of these two pious sheikhs is the son of the villagers' deceased saint around whose shrine the tombs of the villagers' cemetery is spread. As this sheikh does not live in the village, he frequently comes to it either for an ordinary visit, for taking part in settling serious disputes between individuals or families, or to collect his annual custom of crops offered to him by the villagers during harvest time. During his stay he moves from one guest house to another as the guest of a clan or a family which endeavours to provide hospitality for him and thus win his approval. In return, the sheikh is requested to write charms, or to bless water, or to read over a sick person, and thus secure his 'baraka'.[1]

The piety of the other religious man is based also on the fact that he is the grandson of a man who was one of the favourite disciples of the chief founder of the Nakshbadia mystic sect. His grandfather is reputed to have done miraculous deeds and had composed mystic verses usually recited amongst the members of the sect. His piety is also based on the grounds that he studied at al-Azhar Mosque and thus he is considered to be well versed in Koranic studies. It was because of his piety that he gained most of the votes in Silwa, when he stood as a candidate for the Parliament as mentioned earlier.

It is also recognized that people who know the sacred book by heart should be venerated as the carriers of knowledge, and many people regard them as possessed of 'baraka'. In Arab councils, religious men are always included, and their decisions are usually respected.

Moreover, the main events of life and death have their religious significance or at least their sanction. It is in the Prophet's tradition to celebrate the naming ceremony, to circumcise children, and to get them married.

[1] This sheikh died during my field work and a delegation from the village went to his village in condolence.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

learned women who had finished a Kuttab course and proceeded to a higher educational course in either al-Azhar or the College Mosques (Madrasah); but their numbers were very small in comparison.[1] I was told by one of the Kuttab Sheikhs that some of the pious ancestors recommended that women should only know a few chapters of the Koran to enable them to say their prayers, and also to learn particularly Surat al-Nur.[2] He went on further to say that Imam Malik thought it inadvisable to teach reading and writing to girls as well as to the sons of 'tyrants and oppressors'.[3]

The following is an account of how a boy spends his day in the Kuttab. The day begins always before sunrise and the first boy who arrives in the morning opens the Kuttab door with the key which is usually hidden underneath the door or outside the threshold. The Sheikh (always called by the boys 'Our Master')[4] arrives later, usually after sunrise; until his arrival, the boys would be busy reciting their assigned portion of the Koran which they had written on their wooden tablets the day before. On the Sheikh's arrival, older or more advanced boys would one by one hand over their tablet to the Sheikh and go on reciting what is written on it, and on satisfying the Sheikh as to their proper and accurate memorizing, they would be asked to clean their tablets and proceed to the next assignment. The same procedure is followed with the younger boys. Those who have failed to satisfy the Sheikh by forgetting sentences or hesitating in the correct pronunciation would be asked to go on repeating their assignment to be heard again by the Sheikh later on. In his work in the Kuttab, the Sheikh, especially if he is blind, relies a great deal on one or two monitors ('areef).

After proving that they have learnt their assignment, the boys are asked to wash their tablets with water, the drops of which must fall into a pot, and not be allowed to fall on to the ground as they contain the dissolved words of God on which no one should tread, as this is considered to be sacrilege (haram). This also applies to the tablet itself when the assignment is written on it, and a boy who drops it on the ground has to kiss it in respect. After washing the tablet with water, however, thus removing the previous writing, a layer of whitish clay is put on it to render the surface fit for writing again. The ink is made by the boys themselves, by mixing fine oven soot with ground roasted nuts of a gum tree together with some gum. This mixture is left for some time to brew before it is actually

[1] D. B. MacDonald, *Aspects of Islam*, pp. 293–4.

[2] On looking up this Koranic chapter, the writer found that it mainly dealt with preventive measures against fornication and slander, and related the story of 'Aysha, the Prophet's wife, when she was slandered by enemies, and how God revealed the truth about her chastity.

[3] The writer had no opportunity of checking the truth of this statement attributed to Imam Malik.

[4] The Kuttab Sheikh is usually called by this title, 'Our Master', even by adults, especially the illiterate people—see Taha Hussein, *al-Ayyam* (An Egyptian Childhood).

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

there are three or four such buildings. Five times a day a *mueddin* chants the call to prayer from each mosque—from the minaret if there is one—and the resonant voices of these officiants may be heard far beyond the confines of the village.

An old graveyard often stands in the middle of a village, probably indicating the older boundary, the houses built beyond it having been erected later owing to the increasing population (see below, p. 72 and Fig. 32). A whitewashed building, crowned with

FIG. 10. WARP-THREADS ATTACHED TO PALM-TREES

a dome, stands, perhaps, on the highest point of the burial-ground, indicating the last resting-place of a sheikh, or holy man, or, at any rate, erected in his honour. Candles are usually lighted in the building on "the night of Friday"—*i.e.*, the night preceding the Friday—in commemoration of the sheikh. Such lights are, in most cases, the only illumination out of doors to guide the late wayfarer. These buildings, and there are often several in or around one village, are prominent architectural features, standing up with their whitewashed walls and domes above, and in glaring contrast to, the mud houses and hovels of the peasants.

Shops of different kinds are situated in the wider streets or lanes,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

minutes after the death of the person to whom it belongs. Another explanation of falling stars is that they are darts aimed by God at unbelievers. Lane says[1] that they are believed to be darts thrown by God at evil *ginn*, usually called *'afārīt*.

Certain precautions must be taken by a woman after she has given birth to a child. A woman who has lately lost her baby must not enter the room where a woman is being confined, nor for seven days after this event. If this taboo is broken the woman who was last confined will have no milk for her baby.

If a cat gives birth to kittens which all die, and a woman gives birth to a child in the same house in which the cat had its kittens, the cat must be taken away from the house or the baby may die. Or, if it lives, the mother will have no milk.

Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a stone, roughly conical in shape, standing in the fields, and surrounded by whatever crops are being cultivated on that spot. It is said that men have often tried to dig it up, excavating to a considerable depth all round it, but no one has ever been able to come to the bottom of the stone. It is believed by the peasants to be very ancient. A certain mystery is attached to it because of these beliefs, thereby doubtless enhancing its magical value. Women who have not enough milk with which to nurse their children visit this stone on a Friday. They must not speak when coming to and going away from the spot, and they should step over it, still preserving absolute silence, seven times. After this, it is believed, they will have no difficulty in suckling their infant. I was told that the stone has been visited for this purpose, among others, for a hundred years or more.

If a woman or child brings meat to a house where there is a woman who has a child under seven days old that person must not go into the mother's room, but the latter must come out of her room and step over the meat three times. If she does not do this she will have no milk.

When a woman who is a Christian, whether Copt, Protestant, or of any other denomination, has given birth to a child her relatives take some wheat flour and mix it with water. Out of this dough they make several crosses, sticking them on the walls of the room occupied by the mother and child. The greatest

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, p. 283.

THE FELLĀḤIN OF UPPER EGYPT

843 789 the infant, hanging it round its neck till it is seven years old, after which period it will be immune.

776 The *ḳarīneh* seen by King David was the queen of them all, and the promise she gave is binding on all her subjects. She herself is not, according to my informant, the double of any human being; she is by herself, and, like the king of the *aḳrān*, lives for ever.

796 794 753 A woman's *ḳarīneh* may do good or evil to her children till they have passed the age of seven years She does harm, so I was told, only if the mother has been doing something wrong, or has been jealous of another. For instance, if the *ḳarīneh* clutches a child by the throat it means that the child's mother has been ill-tempered, and so on.

A man's *ḳarīn* does not affect his children; it only affects him. If he should lose his temper with his wife or family, or with his friends, or does wrong in any way, and goes to bed unrepentant, he may wake up in the morning and find that some illness has attacked him. This has been caused by his *ḳarīn*. When he is [783 789] sorry and has expressed his repentance, or has called in a magician, who will give him a charm to wear under his left arm, he will be cured.

753 796 794 If a child seems sickly and gets thinner and weaker every day the mother knows that her *ḳarīneh* is trying to draw her child away from her. Various methods are employed to mitigate this evil. ● 778 755 Near a small village in Asyūṭ Province there is a large stone which is called the stone of the Sheikheh Fāṭimeh, who is believed to be buried here. If a child is being drawn away by its mother's *ḳarīneh* the mother will take it on a Friday to this stone, near which she will place the child, she herself staying to watch over it. If the child goes to sleep quietly the mother knows that it will recover, but if it cries and refuses to sleep she takes it home again, knowing full well that it will shortly die. I have myself seen a child lying near the stone fast asleep, with its mother sitting by.

In a village in Middle Egypt there is an old, disused graveyard, crowned by the domed tomb of a celebrated local sheikh. The other graves are now fallen into ruin, and many of them show large, gaping hollows (Fig. 32). A woman whose child is affected by her *ḳarīneh* will take it and place it in one of these cavities, the results being the same as in the case of the stone of the Sheikheh Fāṭimeh. This is a common custom in many parts of Egypt.

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

A child under eight years of age may suddenly begin to shake all over, gasping, and catching at its throat, as if it could not breathe. When this happens the grandmother, or, if there is no grandmother, a neighbour, is called in, and she takes the child, or, if there is more than one child under eight years of age, each one in turn, on to her lap and folds her *gallabīyeh* (native dress) over it. Then she takes a spindle and the implement (*maḥalleh*) on to which the wool is wound after it is spun, and winds the wool on to it; if there is no wool she will simulate the action of winding.

FIG. 32. RUINED GRAVES, IN THE APERTURES OF WHICH CHILDREN ARE PLACED WHEN AFFECTED BY THE MOTHER'S ḲARĪNEH

Then she will break both the spindle and the *maḥalleh*, and the child will recover.

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may sometimes perform a kindly action, for a certain woman who is related to a man whom I know always declares that her *ḳarīneh* is very good to her. This woman has ten boys and two girls, and she is a widow and very poor. Her *ḳarīneh*, so she says, often comes to her when she is short of money and cannot do anything to help herself or her children. On one occasion when she was in this plight she heard her *ḳarīneh* call her by name three times while she was sleeping at night. Her *ḳarīneh* then took her by the hand and led her down the street in which she lived. When she got to the end of it the *ḳarīneh* put some money in her hand and left her. The woman then returned to her house.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

forty days old and a girl eighty before they can receive this sacrament.[1]

Exception to this rule is made in cases of grave illness. According to my informant, the water for baptism is contained in a tank in the ground. After asking the mother what name is to be given to the child the priest dips the infant into the water three times, each time repeating the name chosen for it. The child is then returned to its mother, who dresses it, and then the priest takes a silken thread, which the mother has brought with her, and places it round the child, passing it under its left arm. He then ties this thread into a knot with a loop. A certain number of prayers are repeated, after which a few drops of the Eucharistic wine are given to the child to drink. Most of the people who have been present at this ceremony now take their departure, but the parents, with the child, remain in the church while the choir sing certain chants. The priest then questions the parents as to their willingness to bring up the child with a knowledge of the Christian religion, impressing on them how great their responsibility is with regard to the proper religious instruction of their child.

When the ceremony is over the parents give the priest some money, the amount varying according to their means, and then the priest unties the knot he made in the silken thread.

In all Egyptian villages a number of little boys may be seen with their heads shaved save for a few tufts of hair, which are left untouched. Each of such tufts is dedicated, in the case of Muslims, to a sheikh, or to a saint if the child's parents are Copts, or sometimes all the tufts are dedicated to one sheikh or saint. I am told that there is no *special* age for the hair to be cut in this way, but I believe it is always done in very early childhood, probably as soon as the hair has grown, for I have never seen any but young children with these tufts of hair left on their heads. The ceremonial cutting off of the tufts is not, so far as I have discovered, performed at any particular age of boyhood, but the date of the performance seems to depend on whether the father can afford the expense that the ceremony entails, such expense in some parts of Upper Egypt being considerable. It has never been suggested to me that the ceremony takes place when the boy has reached the age of puberty. Indeed, as far as my own experience goes, the tufts were removed long before that period was reached.

[1] *The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt* (Oxford, 1884), vol. ii, p. 263.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

F C 302 852 7778

When it is desired that the tufts shall be shaved off quite an important ceremony takes place—at least, according to my informant, in Asyūṭ Province. When possible the child is taken to the tomb or tombs of the sheikh or sheikhs to whom the tufts of hair are dedicated, and the tufts are removed just within, or just outside, the sacred building (Fig. 39), or the child may be taken to a mosque, where the ceremony can also be performed. If the child is a Copt it is taken to the church or churches named after the saint or saints to whom these tufts of hair have been dedicated. In the case of the Muslims the village barber is called in to remove the hair, but with the Copts a priest performs the rite. The removal of these tufts takes place if possible when the hair is four to five centimetres long, but in parts of Upper Egypt the ceremony is so expensive for a poor *fellāh* that the child may have to wait some time longer before the tufts can be removed. Bread and meat are taken to the tombs or mosques where the ceremony is to be performed, and then a feast is held to the accompaniment of dancing, beating of the drum (*darābukkeh*), hand-clapping, and *zaghārīṭ*.[1] The barber on these occasions may demand quite a large sum of money, and altogether the ceremony rarely costs less than six pounds, often more.

FIG. 39. CHILD ABOUT TO HAVE ITS TUFTS OF HAIR CUT OFF AT THE TOMB OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK

The man on the right is the barber.

F C [29] [532] [192]
F C [262]
F C [425]
F C [152]

[1] The shrill cries of joy uttered by women on all festive occasions.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

I myself witnessed the performance of the rite in Fayūm Province, where the proceedings were simpler. The child whose tufts were to be removed was taken to the tomb of the sheikh Umbārak, to whom they had all been dedicated. The barber arrived and shaved off the hair just within the entrance to the tomb. On this occasion the child was held by the sister-in-law of the child's mother, but I do not think there is any fixed rule as to who should act in this capacity. There was no feast or dancing, but such festivities may take place also in this province, though they are not necessary, as I was told was the case in Asyūṭ Province. The child's mother is a friend of mine, and as I paid the barber's fee myself I managed, with the assistance of the woman who held the child, to secure half the hair that had been cut off. The cut-off hair is always buried outside the tomb or mosque where it has been cut off, and is put in the ground either loose [1] or else is first enclosed in a clay ball. On the occasion when I was present at this ceremony the hair was enclosed in a clay ball and buried outside the sheikh Umbārak's tomb, and half was kept back and put in another clay ball and presented to me. The ball in my possession is somewhat flattened at the base, owing to the fact that the clay of which it is made was rather moist, and the placing of the ball outside the house to sun-bake naturally flattened that portion which rested on the ground.

As stated above, Coptic parents take their children to have the tufts removed at the church or churches, or sometimes it may be to the tomb or tombs, of the saint or saints to whom the tufts of hair are dedicated. The priest, as has also been stated, officiates as barber, the father presenting a gift of money to the church or churches where the tufts are removed. On such an occasion a special service is held at the church, and oxen and fowls are killed outside the building, the meat, together with bread, being distributed among the assembled crowd of friends and the poor. If the parents are not rich enough to supply such a munificent feast they will bring a smaller quantity of meat with them, and will distribute it and the bread to the crowds which always collect outside the building on these occasions; in such cases no sacrifices are made. Among the Copts no dancing takes place at this ceremony as among the Muslims, but the women utter the cries of joy (*zaghārīṭ*), and there is a good deal of singing.

I have been told that if a woman remains for a long time after

[1] See my article in *Man*, vol. xxv, Pl. E, Fig. 4.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

I have been told that if a woman remains for a long time after marriage without the prospect of a child she will pray for a son, promising that, in the event of her prayer being answered, she will have the boy's hair shaved, leaving only the tufts, which she will dedicate to the sheikh or sheikhs, or to the saint or saints, with whom she has interceded. When offering such prayers she will probably repair to the tomb of the sheikh, or to the church of the Coptic saint, to whom she wishes to appeal. I was told in Fayūm Province that if a boy is seen with his hair cut into tufts it means that he is an only son, and that this style of headdress will ensure him a long life. The initial cutting of the hair, it should be pointed out, is performed at home.

Among the Copts the rite of circumcision should be observed before baptism, according to Dr Butler.[1] The actual ceremony closely resembles the Muslim rite, so that the following description applies to the followers of both religions, the only difference being that whereas the Coptic child should have this operation before baptism, for the Muslim there is no limitation as to age, though it is always carried out during the early years of a child's life. The ceremony entails a certain expense, and is therefore sometimes carried out conjointly with a marriage ceremony, so that the cost may be shared.

The boy who is to undergo this operation has his hands and feet dyed with *ḥenna* at sunset two days before it takes place. On the following day the barber comes and cuts the boy's hair in a particular way, called *muḳarraṣ*, which means 'made into little loaves or cakes.' I do not think that this form of hairdressing is in any way connected with the tufts of hair described above. After the haircutting the boy is washed, and, so I was told, coins are put on his face. This is probably the same custom as is observed at weddings, when the female visitors who wish to present the bride with small sums of money go up to her and place the coin they wish to give to her on her upturned face. In the case of the boy the money presented in this way is taken by the barber. The boy then has a particular kind of felt cap placed on his head. This cap, which is white in colour, decorated with yellow designs and tassels (Fig. 40), is purchased by the parents especially for the occasion, and worn only for this rite. The cap is further decorated by the attachment of scraps of coloured paper or bits of cloth or muslin. The boy, thus attired, is then placed on a horse, usually, I believe, with his face toward the animal's tail; he is covered up with a shawl, and, with one man holding him securely and another leading

[1] See my article in *Man*, vol. xxv, p. 263.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

solemnly stepped over them backward and forward seven times. Four charms in all were used, representing the head of Isis, a mummified divinity, a scarab, and a cat (Fig. 44). When this was accomplished the lower jaw-bone of an ancient Egyptian skull was placed on the ground. The same ceremony was yet again performed, being repeated with two complete ancient Egyptian heads, one a well-preserved mummified head, the other a skull. A glass of water was then brought, into which the blue glazed charms were dropped. Each woman drank some of the water, and then picked out the charms and sucked them, and some rubbed their bodies with these magical objects, and also applied the water to their persons.

It may interest my readers to know that on my return to Egypt the following year one of the first items of news communicated to me by my servant was that at least two of the women who had had resort to my charms would shortly bear children.

Great efficacy is attached to the Pyramids, and childless women will repair to one of them and walk round it seven times, believing that this perambulation will assist them to become mothers. Women sometimes beg to be allowed to remove small portions of the decorated walls in ancient tomb-chapels to assure their bearing children. It appears that ancient things in Egypt are credited with great potency in this respect, but it is difficult, if not impossible, to obtain any reliable information from the people themselves as to why they attach such magical power to antiquities. The stepping over the tomb-shaft suggests a belief in reincarnation, and this belief does exist among the peasants, as will be seen later on; but there is also the idea that *barakeh* is attached to anything that is old, or sacred, or even peculiar. The word *barakeh* means blessing, and *barūkeh* is a lucky coin, a thing to bring good luck.

Women who have no children will sometimes visit a sheikh's tomb, entreating him to intervene on their behalf, and vowing to make some gift in return if their wish is granted. A cord or cords are often to be seen hanging across the inside of such a building, and from it are suspended a variety of objects, including coloured handkerchiefs. These are, in many cases, the votive offerings of women, which they have hung up in the tomb when their prayers for offspring have been answered.

Lane[1] records the practice of visiting tombs or mosques to obtain

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, pp. 300 f.

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

842 782 a blessing, or to urge some special petition, such as the gift of children. He states that the suppliants believe that a more favourable reception to their prayers will be granted if offered up in such sacred places.

842 778 123 *Barakeh* is also occasionally believed to be possessed by, or attached to, living people. Over and over again women have come up to touch me because they believed I had this virtue. Among the numbers of women who in 1926 came to me to step over the blue glazed charms which I always take about with me was a young married woman who was in a state almost verging on madness because she had no children. Five years ago she had given birth to a child which survived only a few hours. Since then she had had no hope of becoming a mother. She was in a desperate plight, and her fears were increased because she suspected that her husband would shortly divorce her as there seemed to be no prospect of a family. She begged and entreated me to help her, so I suggested the charms, over which she stepped seven times. She came a second and a third time, becoming more and more frantic as time went on.

The last time she visited me she said, "O gracious lady, I know you *can* help me if you will; we all know you have so much *barakeh*!" She then seized my hand, pressing it against her, and saying, "You *can* give me *barakeh* if you will!"

I expressed my sorrow for and sympathy with her, and she took her departure. Not long after I heard from one of her fellow-villagers that her wish was at last realized, and that she had hopes of becoming a mother. It was all put down to me, and she called it *my* child! Many people after this came to me from her village for the same purpose, and all, so I heard, met with the same success. The population of that village should be appreciably increased through my supposed *barakeh*!

842 764 It is a popular belief in Egypt that if a dead child is tightly bound in its shroud the mother cannot conceive again. Therefore the shroud and the cords binding it are always loosened just before burial, dust also being put in the child's lap. The dust is put there, so I was told, in order to keep the body lying on its back. The woman who gave me this information said that sometimes a body twists round when decomposition sets in, and if this happens the mother cannot have another child. If, in spite of precautions, the woman as time goes on seems to have no prospect of again becoming

842 775

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

my *barakeh*. I am happy to say that in both cases the performance was crowned with success!

I have already mentioned that the peasants appear to believe that ancient things are specially endowed with *barakeh*, and that on that account they may be efficacious in curing childless women of their barrenness. On the site of an ancient temple in Middle Egypt is a pool of water in which large inscribed stones are partly submerged, while others lie on the ground close by. The site is

FIG. 49. WOMEN PERAMBULATING THE POOL ON THE SITE OF AN ANCIENT TEMPLE

called *el-Kenīseh* (the Church) by the peasants, probably because it became known that it is the site of an ancient temple. This pool is believed to possess miraculous powers, and every Friday childless women flock thither from all the surrounding villages. They clamber over the stones on the edge of the pool and also over those which are partly submerged, performing this somewhat arduous feat three times, and going more or less in a circular direction (Fig. 49). After this they hope to conceive.

Curiously enough, women come to this spot and act in the same manner to prevent conception. On the occasion of my visit to the pool one of the women who was there told me that she had come for this latter purpose. She did not want to have another child for some time, as she had one or two very young children living

FERTILITY RITES

Women also come here if they are experiencing difficulty in suckling their children, and donkeys which are not producing sufficient milk for their young are likewise driven here. The ceremony is the same as that for childlessness, and after its performance the milk is supposed to be much increased in quantity.

Many years ago my brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, recorded a custom of hanging skins of foxes over the doors of houses in Lower Nubia.[1] On inquiry he found that they were believed to be charms "to protect the women of the household, preventing miscarriages, and helping them in labour." In some parts of Egypt if a mother wants another child she will attach a small piece of fox's skin to the head of her last-born living child. After doing this she hopes that her wish will be granted.

The pollen of a male palm is used as a charm to produce fertility; some of it is mixed in water, which is drunk by the woman who wishes to have a child. The fertilization of the female palm with such pollen might naturally account for the belief in its efficacy as a charm to cure a woman of barrenness.

It is believed that if a woman who has lately had a child goes to see another woman who has recently given birth to a child which did not survive, the latter will not conceive again. The happy mother whose child lives must wait until her friend's child has been dead for fifteen days, when all danger of seeing her will be over. However, should such an unfortunate visit be paid before the fifteen days have expired, the bereaved mother must counteract the danger of future childlessness by visiting the tomb of her dead child and going through the ceremony of stepping over its body already described. She may as an alternative choose one of the other rites for the same purpose.

I will now describe some of the methods employed to prevent conception. One I have mentioned already in connexion with the stones in and beside the pool. If an expectant mother wishes to have no more children for a certain period she will take the seeds of a castor-oil plant and, on the day after her child is born, she will eat one of the seeds if she wishes to be without another child for one year, two if for two years, and so on. This is believed to be invariably effective. If a woman has a spite against another who wishes to have a child she may secretly insert some castor-oil seeds into her food, and so render her unable to conceive.

[1] *Man*, vol. ix (1909), pp. 9 f.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER VII

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

WHEN a male or female Muslim is dying it is the custom to give him or her some water to drink. So far, despite careful inquiries, I have discovered no definite belief associated with the practice; all that I have been told is that it is a custom that must always be observed. It may originally, perhaps, have been a purificatory or vivificatory rite. In certain parts of Egypt it is the custom for some of the people sitting or standing near a person who is *in extremis* to squeeze his or her body with their hands, in order to force the soul out of it. Men do this for a man and women for a woman. When death has actually taken place the eyes and mouth of the deceased are closed, and the legs drawn down straight and laid close together. The body is then washed, the water for this purpose being obtained, if possible, from a mosque or from some sacred well or pool connected with a sheikh. In Upper Egypt the corpse may be washed by a *fikīh*, who takes as payment all the clothes of the deceased, and also the remains of the soap used in the washing.

As Egypt is a very hot country burial takes place very shortly after death. For instance, if a death has occurred in the morning or early afternoon the funeral takes place the same day. On the other hand, if death resulted from some injury due to accident or an act of violence burial is not permitted till the Government doctor and police officials have made full investigations.

If some one is dying in the village the news soon spreads, and friends and relations flock in crowds to the house. The moment the breath is out of the body female relatives and a number of professional mourners begin to shriek and scream (Fig. 50). Many of them leave the house of death and perambulate the village seven times, uttering the while piercing cries, and waving handkerchiefs, usually black, blue, or green in colour, as they go along. This perambulation of wailing women is not, anyhow at the present day, consciously associated with any idea of driving the spirit or

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

E
765
152

The priest, I was told, was to arrive at 3.30 P.M., so I started off for the house early in the afternoon. I found a number of women seated in an inner room, wailing and waving their coloured handkerchiefs with the usual rhythmic movements. The sister of the dead man began a long dissertation in his praise, speaking of all his good qualities and good deeds. She would speak for a short time, then pause, whereupon the wailing women would join in a rhythmic chorus of cries, occasionally uttering the customary piercing cries of grief. The sister would again take up her theme, followed shortly by the wailing women as before.

FIG. 56. COPTIC PRIEST HOLDING CROSS

E
[276]
E
293
291
[778]
E
765
788
783

Meanwhile, one of the men seated outside the house came in and handed round cigarettes. Several of the women smoked, but this form of enjoyment did not in the least interfere with, or interrupt, the wailing and screaming. Still the priest did not come, though all the arrangements for his visit had been made—a large metal basin of water being placed on a chair, with a glass decanter of water standing in it. At last, after four o'clock, he arrived with his *ʿarīf*, both of them having come from the monastery in the desert a few miles off. The priest read some prayers, after which the *ʿarīf* chanted certain passages, and then portions from the Bible were read aloud by one of the men present. Immediately upon his arrival the priest had placed a small silver cross (see Fig. 56) in the basin of water, and it remained there all the time the reading and chanting were in progress. When these were ended he removed the cross, which was, of course, dripping with water, turned to me, and pressed it on my forehead, making the sign of the cross on me at the same time. He repeated this ceremony with each of the men in turn, and then, turning toward the crowd of women, sprinkled them with some of the water from the basin. Incense had been kept burning from the moment of the priest's arrival, and he now took up the censer and advanced with it toward the room

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

If the land to be irrigated is much above water-level two or three of these *shawādīf* (plural of *shādūf*) are worked one above the other.

The men thus engaged usually sing at their task, some of their songs being very melancholy, and descriptive of their hard and laborious toil. One of them runs thus:

Shawādīf,
Their ropes are of palm-fibre
And their pails are of goatskins.
And it was in ancient times that *shawādīf* were
invented
By the blessed Ṣāliḥ Zabādi.

The ropes referred to are those by which the bucket is suspended from the end of the weighted branch which acts as a lever. The name of the supposed inventor is, of course, mythological.

The following is a lament on the hard labour involved in the working of a *shādūf*:

Hast Thou resolved upon strangling me, O God?
Loosen the noose!
No mother weeps [for me],
No aunt,
No sister![1]

Another method of raising the water is by means of a water-wheel round the circumference of which pottery jars are attached. Another small wheel with cogs is attached to the same axis as the larger wheel, and into it fit the cogs of a large horizontal wheel. When this is made to revolve the two vertical wheels are set in motion. A long pole is attached to the horizontal wheel, and to it an ox, cow, or buffalo, or even a camel, is yoked and driven round and round by a man or boy. The animal is usually blind-folded to prevent it from becoming giddy. The groaning and creaking of the turning water-wheel form, to my mind, a most soothing sound.[2] Yet another contrivance for raising the water to the level of the fields is the Archimedean screw, depicted in Fig. 98.

During harvest-time every available man, woman, and child is employed in the fields; but before any of the corn is cut some of the villagers go into the fields and pluck the finest ears by hand. These are plaited into a special form, and this object, called the

[1] See H. Schaefer, *The Songs of an Egyptian Peasant*, translated by F. H. Breasted (Leipzig, 1904), pp. 43 f.

[2] For excellent photographs of a *shādūf* and a water-wheel see *op. cit.*, pp. 45 and 107.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

'bride of the corn' (*'arūset el-ḳamḥ*), is used as a charm. One may be suspended over the house-door as an antidote to the evil eye; another may be hung up in the room containing the stores of food, as a charm to ensure abundance. Many tradesmen hang such objects in their shop-windows, believing that this will bring them plenty of customers. Again, in some parts of Egypt the 'bride of the corn' is temporarily placed on the heaps of grain after the winnowing is completed, as a charm to secure a good harvest the following year. Sometimes the grain from these heads of corn is extracted and mixed with the next year's sowing. The 'bride' may be left hanging till it is replaced at the next harvest, or, again, it may be allowed to remain in its place until it falls to pieces (Fig. 99).

FIG. 98. THE ARCHIMEDEAN SCREW

Before the field is cut a certain number of people are given presents of corn by the owner. These gifts of the firstfruits are bestowed on some of the poorest people in the village, as well as on the barber, the *mueddin* (the man who chants the call to prayer from the mosque), the *zummāreh*-player, the carpenter, and the *fuḳahā*—the last-mentioned being poor men who recite the Ḳorān in mosques, in private houses, at funeral ceremonies, and at the periodical visits to the grave (see pp. 112, 114 f., 117 ff., and Fig. 100).

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

The corn is cut with a primitive sickle (Fig. 101), and is immediately tied up into small sheaves, which are carried to the threshing-floor on the backs of camels (Fig. 102). The threshing-floor is usually a bare place near the fields, and here the corn is piled up in great heaps.

The threshing is done with a sledge-like machine, called *nōrag*, drawn by oxen. It consists of a wooden frame, on which the driver sits, and solid iron wheels which are passed over and over the corn, breaking up the stalks and separating the grain from the husks (Fig. 103). The broken stalks are collected and packed into net sacks, which are carried off on the backs of donkeys (Fig. 104). The grain, which is, of course, still mixed up with chaff, is piled up in heaps ready for winnowing. This takes place out of doors, the grain being thrown up into the air with a large wooden fork or a wooden spade (Fig. 105). The wind carries off the chaff, the grain falling below in a heap (Fig. 106). A second process is necessary in order to clear the grain entirely of chaff, and so it is carefully sifted in large sieves. The grain is then piled up into heaps, over which palm-branches are sometimes placed to prevent the wind from blowing any of it away. The heaps are left standing all night, and late in the evening it is customary for the owner to place flat, round loaves of bread among the grain, these loaves being the perquisite of the man who, on the following morning, carries it to the owner's granaries.

FIG. 99. TWO 'BRIDES OF THE CORN,' THE UPPER ONE NEW, THE LOWER SOME YEARS OLD

The granaries are usually situated on the roofs of houses, and are made of clay or basket-work.[1]

It is the custom to pay all the harvesters in kind (Fig. 107), and

[1] See pp. 153 f., 158.

MAGICIANS AND MAGIC

sightseers. The floor and the walls of the room were of mud, but a fairly clean mat was secured for me to sit on, the magician and her patient squatting close by me. The former took the kerchief from off her patient's head, folded it cornerwise, and measured it from corner to corner with the span of her hand. She then knotted it and sat on it. Suddenly her whole body began to shake violently, and she uttered curious noises. This indicated that the sheikh was assisting her and making his presence felt. Her face now underwent a remarkable change of expression, and her voice, attitude, and whole behaviour became distinctly masculine, and everybody present addressed her as the Sheikh Muḥammed. She told her patient that she was to visit a certain sheikh's well, which was situated some miles away from her village. The sick woman asked if she might not go to the well of a sheikh in the magician's own village, but this request was peremptorily refused. It was, she said, necessary that the well mentioned before should be visited. This event happened during Ramaḍān, the month of the Muslim fast, and the magician told the woman that she was to come to see her again on the day of the 'Little Festival' (which immediately follows Ramaḍān) and that then she would give her a charm to wear.

The magician kept up her manly impersonation even after the *séance* was over, and she presently declared, much to the joy and amusement of the villagers, that she had fallen in love with me and wished to marry me! This ridiculous speech was believed to come from the Sheikh Muḥammed who possessed her and whom she impersonated, at any rate for the time being. She would not be satisfied until I consented to be photographed with her!

Another female magician of my acquaintance (Fig. 114) is also somewhat renowned within her village circle. This woman's husband is dead, and she lives with two of her sons. One room in their house is set aside for her use only; no one else must ever enter it, except the people from beneath the earth, with whom she is supposed to be in close and intimate relationship, and for whom there is always a supply of food and a *ḳulleh* full of water in her room. When she takes a meal she does so in this apartment, and she will not eat with other people. She has five familiars who live beneath the earth, and through them she gets into touch with the other subterranean supernatural beings, including *'afārīt*. One of these familiars is called Zedimāl; another, a son of Zedimāl, is called

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

F
791
782
776

sharing it with his *ukht*, but the latter was angry and refused, saying that she was greater than he, and must have the sacrifice of a ram to herself, demanding also that her *ṣulḥeh* should come first. The magician could not then afford to buy two rams for the double sacrifice, so matters were delayed, and nothing could be done while I was in Egypt.

F
755
782
776

This female magician is called in to help and give charms and advice on all manner of occasions. If a woman is suffering from sheikh-possession she will consult the magician as to why the sheikh is thus troubling her. A woman whom I have known for some years was afflicted in this way, and the magician was called in to advise. I was present at the time and witnessed the whole ceremony. The magician, having heard the woman's account of her trouble, went into a corner of the room and was covered all over with a blanket. After muttering to herself for some time she suddenly clapped her hands and began a conversation with her familiar Zedimāl. Salutations were passed between Zedimāl and all those present in the room, including myself, and then the magician asked why the sheikh was troubling the woman. It was explained that the sheikh demanded a pair of gold earrings, which the woman he possessed was to wear, and also a new *gallabīyeh* (dress), yellow in colour, also to be worn by the woman. If these were obtained the sheikh would be appeased. The husband of this woman was a poor man, but the gold earrings and the new dress had to be bought, and would be paid for by degrees. Shortly after this I was in the village again and inquired how the woman was. I was informed that the earrings and dress had been purchased, but that she was still troubled, though not to the same extent. She had again inquired of the magician, and I believe the sheikh had demanded more, but I never heard all the details!

F
C
791
778

In a small village in Upper Egypt there are two magicians, one a Copt, the other a Muslim. They are both clever, and both are in great demand, their fame having spread far beyond their native province. They are friends of mine, and have told me a number of the devices and charms used by them on various occasions. An inscribed charm obtained from magicians is usually enclosed in a small leather case, and hung by a cord of plaited leather or a string round the neck or waist of the person for whom it has been prescribed (Fig. 115). The following information was obtained from the two men mentioned above.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR 10

MAGICIANS AND MAGIC

The following is another method of finding hidden treasure. In this case a priest acted as magician, and the exact spot where the treasure lay hidden was known.

On the outskirts of a certain village in Upper Egypt there is a very large stone. It lies on the ground and is covered with water for a great part of the year—probably water left from the inundation. Under this stone treasure of great value is believed to be buried The stone is said to extend some distance underground, its base being some yards below the surface. A cock is supposed to be the guardian of this treasure, and it sometimes appears to certain of the villagers, crows two or three times, and then disappears.

A Coptic priest in the neighbourhood owns a book in which is entered a list of all the buried treasures in that province, where such hidden hoards are believed to be numerous. Among others in this book was noted the description and locality of the hidden treasure in question, and he determined to see if he could get it. Accordingly, at midnight he went to the stone, taking his book with him, for in it were written the proper incantations to be recited on such an occasion. He also took incense with him, which he burned in a dish, meanwhile reciting the incantations prescribed in his book. Suddenly the great stone broke in two, the two halves banging together and making a sound like the roar of a lion. This terrific noise disturbed all the inhabitants of the village near by, who came out to see what was the matter. The priest was so afraid of being discovered that he climbed up a tall palm-tree not far from the spot and remained there till dawn, when he ventured to climb down and return to his house.

I was told that, as soon as the priest ceased burning the incense and reciting the incantations, both acts having come to an abrupt conclusion when he fled in terror to the tree, the two halves of the stone joined together again, and not the slightest trace of a crack is now visible.

The people say that it would be useless for anyone to attempt to dig up the treasure, for the deeper you dig the lower the stone goes into the earth.

There is a large number of stories current all over the country about hidden treasure, and I have been told of the existence of more than one book containing a list of places where treasure is to be found.

It is the custom of many of the countryfolk to hide their money

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

SUPERSTITIONS

F
Sheep are regarded as very gentle animals, and are supposed 755
on that account to be watched over by angels, who, on hearing the [825]
child cry, will drive away the mother's *ḳarīneh*, who has caused 776
the illness by clutching at the child's throat. 774

If a boy or child under eight years of age cannot walk the F
mother believes that her *ḳarīneh* has sent an *'afrīt* into the child. [753]
To cure this infirmity she calls in a neighbour to help her. The
mother seats the child on the ground, and places in its lap a number
of dates and some *kishk*. The neighbour and child then go to the
mosque, taking the dates and *kishk* with them. Friday is a
favourite day for such a visit, and they arrange to arrive at noon,
when the men are praying inside the building. The woman leaves
the child seated outside the doorway, and herself retires to a short
distance. When the people begin to come out of the mosque they
see the dates and the *kishk* spread out on the child's dress, and they
all scramble to get their share of them. This frightens the child,
and it begins to scream. On hearing its cries the woman who
brought it to the mosque goes and takes it up in her arms and
carries it home.

It is believed that the screams of the frightened child will scare
away the *'afrīt* in its legs, and that after this it will be able to walk.

Christians employ the same cure for their children who are F
similarly affected, and, be it noted, take them to the mosque, not C
to the church. An old acquaintance of mine, who is a Copt, told 755
me that a child of his was at one time unable to walk, but that it 753
could do so after thus visiting the village mosque. He added that 776
he had taken the child to several doctors in Cairo and Asyūṭ, but 774
that they had been unable to do it any good!

In a large town in Upper Egypt there are two mosques, in both F
of which there is an ancient pillar. People who are ill with jaun- 755
dice go to either of these mosques and lick the pillar, and then, so 778
I am informed, speedily recover. I visited one of the mosques
and at once detected the ancient pillar, which stands in the main
part of the building among the other pillars supporting the roof.

In Egypt, as in many other countries, hair-cuttings and -comb- F
ings and nail-parings are carefully kept, for if anyone else obtained 754
possession of them he would, by their means, be able to gain an
influence over, and so injure, the original owners. Bones from
which the meat has been eaten, skins of fruit, and the like are
also, for the same reason, either carefully buried or burned in
a fire.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER XV

MUSLIM SHEIKHS AND COPTIC SAINTS

554 C22 792 THE Egyptian peasants venerate a number of holy men and women to whom miraculous powers have been ascribed, either during their lifetime or after their death Such a holy person is given the title of sheikh. The word sheikh means literally an old man, and a man who is advanced in years is often addressed as Sheikh so and so as a term of respect. The word also signifies the head of an Arab tribe, the leading man in a village, and, finally, a learned man (*i.e.*, one learned in the sacred writings).

792 Certain of these holy men and women are venerated all over the country, the cults connected with them having become part of the general popular religion. But, besides these greater personages, there are innumerable local saints, who, however, often draw their devotees from localities beyond the boundaries of their villages.

792 ●798 762 941 However great may be the veneration paid to a saint in his lifetime, the honour he receives after his death is far greater. Among the Muslims it is the custom to erect over the grave of such a person a small whitewashed building, crowned with a dome, the outer and inner walls being usually decorated with line-drawings in colours and with inscriptions consisting of passages from the Ḳorān (see Figs. 139, 140). In many cases it is customary to provide a 'servant' (Fig. 138), or sometimes a number of 'servants,' whose salary is paid out of an endowment in land or money, augmented by the donations of those who visit the tomb. This man, or it may be a woman, is known as "the servant of the sheikh," and the office may descend from father to son. Besides the land surrounding the tomb, the sacred precincts may include a well, the water of which is supposed to be endowed with miraculous properties.

798 795 762 Sometimes a stone, or a heap of stones, or a tree or clump of trees, alone mark the last resting-place of a departed sheikh, but when there is a domed tomb a tree or trees are usually associated

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

with it. However, a tomb is not usually built until the dead sheikh appears to some one and demands such a building.

Most Muslim sheikhs of any standing have two or more tombs, or other burial sites, associated with them. This does not mean that the body of the sheikh is actually buried in any one of these sites, though there are many cases where this is so. A dead sheikh may appear to some man in a dream, or even when he is awake, and tell him to build a tomb on such and such a spot, and may even personally conduct him thither. It may happen that the inhabitants of a village possessing a venerated sheikh have been guilty of misconduct, or have offended the holy man by neglecting to pay him the respect which he considers his due. In such a case, it is believed, the sheikh will appear to a man in a distant village and instruct him to build another tomb. The new tomb often becomes more popular and is visited by a larger number of people than the older building. Thus a sheikh whose original tomb is in Lower Egypt may also be associated with a tomb or tombs far south in Upper Egypt.

FIG. 138. THE 'SERVANT' OF THE SHEIKH SAYID

Candles, or money with which to buy them, form a favourite offering. Such lights are kept burning every night in some sheikhs' tombs; in others they are perhaps burned on one night only in the week, usually a Friday. A number of votive offerings are generally found hanging on a cord or cords stretched across the interior of the building. The gifts display great variety, including glass

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

and bead bracelets, bunches of human hair, handkerchiefs, first-fruits of the cornfields, and so on. Each one registers an answered prayer, for the people flock in crowds to these tombs on certain days of the week—usually Thursdays or Fridays—generally to make some special request, or with the object of being freed from some disease, which they believe the sheikh can cure. A childless woman, or persons possessed by *ʿafārīt*, will come to beg the sheikh to intercede for them. Indeed, the performances of certain rites at the tomb may in themselves effect a cure.

Having removed his or her shoes before entering the building, the visitor then walks from left to right round the catafalque erected beneath the dome three, five, or seven times, reciting meanwhile special passages from the Ḳorān. These perambulations accomplished, the servant of the sheikh takes a broom, kept for this special purpose, and carefully brushes out all the footprints in the interior of the building.

Sick animals are also brought by their owners to a sheikh's tomb, round which they are driven seven times.

In one of the provinces of Upper Egypt, on the lower desert, stands the domed tomb of the sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli (Fig. 139). It is surrounded by a low mud-brick wall, which encloses a few small trees, a well, and two or three graves, wherein relatives of the dead sheikh lie buried. Pots of *ṣabr* (aloes) also decorate the sacred spot, for this plant is believed to bring happiness to the dead. The building is whitewashed, and is decorated with line-drawings in red and blue, illustrating the pilgrimage to Mecca. The surrounding desert is covered with the graves of more ordinary folk. These are marked by heaps of sand, into which are stuck branches of palm-trees, for palm-branches, like the aloe-plants, are believed to be the means of conveying happiness to the dead who lie beneath.

The sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli was only eighteen years old when he died, but from his earliest years he was noted for his piety. He was educated at a small school in his native village, and, as soon as he had learned to read, he spent all his leisure moments studying the Ḳorān. When he died he was buried in an ordinary grave in the lower desert among his dead fellow-villagers. However, one day, when old ʿAli (his father) was squatting on a *maṣṭabeh* (see p. 32), with his head resting on his hand, his dead son appeared before him and caught hold of him by the wrist, saying, " I am very angry."

His father said, " Why are you angry, my son ? "

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

The boy replied, " Because you have not built me a large tomb, and if you do not do so now I will go away to another village."

" O my beloved son," said his father, " to-morrow morning I will begin to build a fine tomb for you."

Young ʿAli held a paper in his hand, and he now presented this to his father, telling him that on it were written full directions for the building of the tomb, together with a specification of the exact

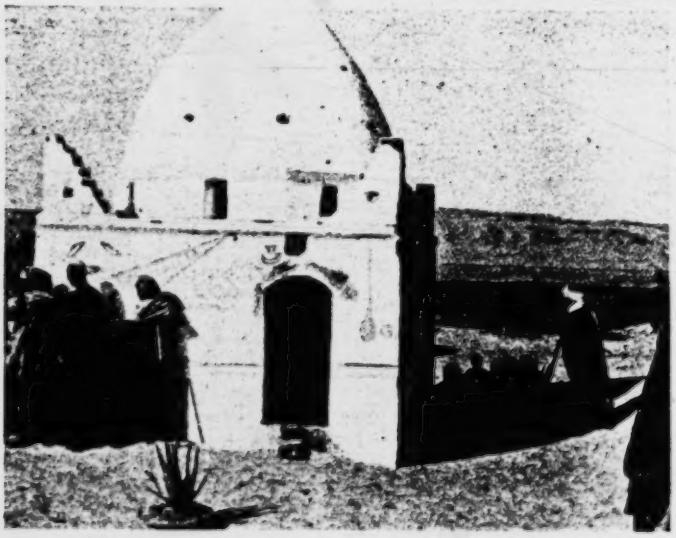

FIG. 139. DOMED TOMB OF THE SHEIKH ḤASAN ʿALI

spot where it was to be built and also as to where would be found a well of water, the locality of which was hitherto unknown.

The tomb was built with all speed, the workmen following the instructions written on the paper presented to old ʿAli by his son. A well was sunk on the spot indicated, and the water from it is excellent. The father states most emphatically that he was wide awake when his son appeared to him. When I questioned old ʿAli as to what he had done with the paper he told me that it had been lost by the workmen !

A small model of a boat is hung up in the sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli's tomb, as in the tombs of many sheikhs, the boat being called the sheikh's ferry-boat.

The mother of this sheikh, who was very devoted to her son, did

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

969 The mother of this Sheikh, who was very devoted to her son, did not survive him for many years. I was present at her funeral, which was attended by a large crowd of friends and relatives. She was buried in a grave near the tomb of her saintly son.

792 158 The sheikh ʿAbdu ʾl-Laṭīf lived in a small village in Middle Egypt, where some of his family still reside. An old man, the son of the sheikh's paternal uncle, is well known to me.[1] The sheikh ʿAbdu ʾl-Laṭīf was, in his lifetime, looked upon as a *walī*.[2] Insanity is the usual qualification for this high standing among the Muslim saints of Egypt, persons thus afflicted being regarded as the favourites of God. The sheikh had a habit of entering the houses of the people at night, after the doors had been locked, and while the evening meal was being cooked; for locked doors formed no barriers to the egress or ingress of this holy man. On entering [269] he would immediately eat up all the food; meat, bread, and vegetables, no matter how large the quantity, would all be devoured on the spot. Any glass bottles that happened to be lying about might be included in this repast, for these he would bite up and [152] swallow without drawing any blood. There was only one thing he feared, and that was water. If anyone threw a few drops of water at him he would run away in terror, as fast as his legs could carry him. My informant remembered him well, and he told me that on one occasion the sheikh entered his house after the entrance door had been securely locked and ate up all the food, including soup prepared for the evening meal.

792 766 778 [969] When the sheikh died hundreds of people attended his funeral, and, being a very good man, he made his bearers walk quickly to the grave.[3] Above it has been erected the usual domed tomb; it is situated near that of the venerated sheikh Umbārak (Fig. 140) for whom a *mūlid*, or festival, is held once every year.[4]

769 688 One year, on the occasion of this festival, a man climbed on to the outside of the tomb of the sheikh ʿAbdu ʾl-Laṭīf without first removing his shoes. Some of the people standing round remonstrated with him for this act of irreverence, but he replied, "Who is the sheikh ʿAbdu ʾl-Laṭīf? He is nobody!" and refused to climb down or to take off his shoes. However, when he wanted

[1] At the moment of writing this I received a letter from Egypt telling me of this old man's death. He is the same man who divorced his wife by the triple [586] divorce, described in Chapter V, pp. 95f.

[2] *Walī* means 'friend' (*i.e.*, of God), and a Muslim saint is commonly so designated.

[3] See Chapter VII, p. 113. [4] See Chapter XVI, pp. 252 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

to climb down and join the festive crowds he found that he could not move, and that, when he tried to do so, his limbs were rigid and his whole body paralysed. On seeing the plight of the wretched man cries to the sheikh were immediately raised. People came with drums and tambourines, others sang and clapped their hands in rhythmic accompaniment to the music, till at last, after about two hours of such intercession, the man regained his power of locomotion, and so was able to move away.

FIG. 140. TOMB OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK
The external mural decorations are to be noted.

Some time after this exhibition of his power the sheikh ʿAbdu ʾl-Laṭīf appeared to a man in a village a few miles distant, telling him to build him a tomb there. The people of this village went in triumph to the sheikh's native place and exultantly told the inhabitants that their sheikh had now come to them.

The original tomb still exists, but it is in a very dilapidated state, and no doubt in course of time it will wholly disappear, unless something happens to revive the veneration formerly paid to the holy man in his native village. Meanwhile, the people of the village where ʿAbdu ʾl-Laṭīf's later resting-place is built hold a *mūlid* every year in honour of their acquired sheikh.

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

792 During the sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf's lifetime he was visited on one occasion by the sheikh Sulimān, who resided in a village some miles distant. Wherever he went the sheikh Sulimān was always accompanied by his faithful servant. On the occasion of this visit [198] the two sheikhs conversed together in an unknown language. [152] This roused the curiosity of the sheikh Sulimān's servant, who after the interview asked his master what they had been talking about. The sheikh told him that ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf had remonstrated with him for coming to his village and had bade him remain in his own neighbourhood. Doubtless jealousy was at the root of this ill-feeling.

792 A few days later the servant noticed very early in the morning 788 that his master's fingers were all burned at the tips. He immediately questioned him as to the cause of this injury, and the sheikh told him that it was his custom to go every night to all the sheikhs' tombs in the neighbourhood and light candles for them, and that while he was engaged in this pious work his fingers were burned.

798 The sheikh Sulimān is now dead, but his piety is still remembered. 766 He is buried in his native village, but six other tombs are erected 769 to his memory in various parts of the country. Moreover, the inhabitants of his village hold a *mūlid* every year in his honour.

In one of the provinces in Upper Egypt, close to the desert hills, 792 lived the sheikheh Ṣulūḥ. This woman had, during her lifetime, a great reputation for holiness, and people flocked to her, in times of difficulty, from all quarters. Her skin was very dark from constant exposure to the sun, and her head, on which she wore no veil, was covered with a crop of hair, thick and long like the wool of a sheep; from beneath her brows peered dark, sharp-looking eyes. Her clothes were scanty, consisting merely of a piece of linen rag and a sort of coat. She remained out in this desert solitude all day, and at night, so I was told, slept alone "in the mountain." As I have explained, the people call the often precipitous high-desert hills the mountain (*el-gebel*), so she probably [133] took shelter in one of the natural or artificial caves which exist in great numbers in the hillsides.

792 On one occasion, when a number of men and women had come 789 to consult her, one of the former asked her what had become of 685 his most valuable camel, which he had lost. The sheikheh at once told him the exact hour in which this loss had occurred, and in-

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

THE FELLĀḤÎN OF UPPER EGYPT

Coptic saints receive the appellation Māri (Saint), and many of the beliefs and ceremonies associated with them are similar to those connected with the Muslim sheikhs.

A Coptic saint is usually buried within the precincts of a monastery or church, which may be dedicated to him. A popular saint may be honoured by the dedication of numerous monasteries and churches to his memory, in all of which he is equally venerated.

Sometimes the same saint may be claimed by Muslims and Copts alike, in which case the grave is often situated in an open space, possibly under the shadow of a tree or trees, the lower branches of which are covered with votive offerings contributed by the followers of both religions. With the Christians as well as with the Muslims candles are a favourite form of votive offering, and when the saint is claimed by the adherents of both faiths their candles may be seen burning side by side.

Many years ago, on a spot in the cultivation in Upper Egypt where a church dedicated to Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi now stands, there was a square plot of *ḥalfa*-grass. This site was claimed by the Muslims as the burial-place of a sheikh. There was a very poor man who lived in the town adjoining these fields and who acted as *farrāsh*[1] at the sugar factory in the same town. One night while he was sleeping he felt some one give him a kick. This naturally aroused him, and he saw standing beside him a man whose face and form were of great beauty, and who was clothed in white garments. This man told the poor *farrāsh* that he was Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi, that he wished him to build a church, and that he would himself indicate the spot on which he wished it to be erected. The saint told the *farrāsh* that he had called him to do this work instead of a rich man, as the latter would boast that by his riches he had built the church, whereas the saint himself would supply the poor man with all that he needed for the erection of the sacred building.

Māri Mīna then led the *farrāsh* to the patch of *ḥalfa*-grass in the fields, and told him to measure two metres from the edge of the *ḥalfa*-grass toward the east and two metres from the edge of the *ḥalfa*-grass toward the west. Then he was to dig the whole plot thus measured out to a depth of two and a half metres. When

[1] Literally, sweeper—the title given to servants employed by the Government to keep the Rest-houses clean, also to men employed in other public buildings in the same capacity.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER XVI

SOME ANNUAL FESTIVALS

THE *Mūlid en-Nebi*, the annual celebration of the birthday of the Prophet, is of course the most important of all the festivals held in honour of Muslim saints. However, I shall content myself here with a description of some of the annual *mawālid* (plural of *mūlid*) held in honour of local village saints which I have attended myself during my six years' sojourn in Egypt.

The sheikh Umbārak is buried in a village in Middle Egypt, and a whitewashed domed building has been erected above his grave. One or two of the outside walls of his tomb are, as is customary, decorated with pictures descriptive of the pilgrimage to Mecca,[1] roughly sketched in red and blue paint, the remainder being inscribed with passages from the Ḳorān. Around the dome are small, what might almost be called clerestory windows, in each of which a lighted candle is placed every night. There is a female 'servant' attached to this sheikh, who is supposed to keep the tomb in order, receive the donations of devotees, and light the candles every evening. One wonders how she manages to carry out this work satisfactorily, as she is quite blind!

The *mūlid* held in honour of the sheikh Umbārak takes place in April and begins early in the afternoon, on the morning of which day similar festivals are inaugurated in certain neighbouring villages in honour of their own particular sheikhs.

At about two o'clock a large crowd collected in the vicinity of the sheikh's tomb, several people, chiefly women, seating themselves around it. The blind servant received donations from the faithful on behalf of the sheikh, part of the time having the sheikh's flag wrapped around her (Fig. 141). As the donors presented their gifts they recited the *Fātiḥah* in low and rapid tones. In the road which ran past the burial-ground, and in the adjacent palm-grove, the holiday-makers engaged in friendly conversation or indulged in various amusements (Fig. 142); and along the roadside booths

[1] See p. 245, Fig. 140.

SOME ANNUAL FESTIVALS

had been erected, wherein butchers and vendors of sweetmeats, toys, and other wares plied their trade, to all appearance doing excellent business (Fig. 143).

Eggs dyed a bright cerise or yellow are a special feature of all these *mawālid*, and those who sold them attracted a considerable number of customers. These coloured eggs, which are also sold on the Coptic Easter Monday, are used for two games, which are played as follows. In one game two boys or men take part, each grasping an egg in his hand. One of them knocks his egg against that of his opponent, and the man whose egg is not cracked is regarded as the winner and takes the cracked egg of his adversary. In the other game several eggs are arranged in a row on the ground, and a number of men sit at a certain distance away from them. Each in turn rolls an egg toward the row of eggs facing him, and the man who first succeeds in cracking one of them wins the lot. These games are played by large numbers of people at all *mawālid*, but never by women and girls. Coloured eggs are used for games, in many cases similar to these, in various parts of Europe, especially in the Balkan states. Again, in some of the Northern counties of England coloured eggs are still used in a game played on Easter Monday which closely resembles the second Egyptian game.

FIG. 141. FEMALE 'SERVANT' OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK, WRAPPED IN THE SHEIKH'S FLAG ON THE DAY OF HIS MŪLID

There were other attractions at this *mūlid* of the sheikh Umbārak. In the palm-grove a conjurer in one part and a poet

[Text continues on p. 255]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

cliff on which the monastery is built towers up above the canal, while behind the building, and outside its surrounding walls, lie two fairly large cemeteries, one Christian and the other Muslim. The present building stands on an ancient site, and many of the old walls of the church and religious houses around it are of great thickness. A considerable portion of the old walls which surround the whole settlement still remain intact, and stories are told of the miraculous powers attributed to them. This monastery, as the massive character of the ancient walls indicates, must have served

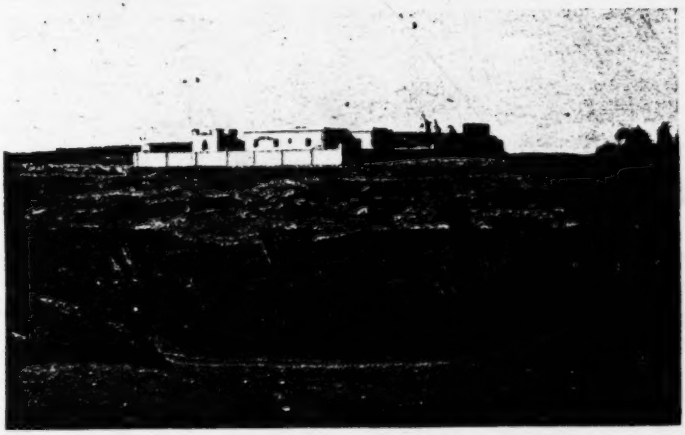

FIG. 146. A MONASTERY DEDICATED TO ST GEORGE

as a stronghold for the Christians, who built it when religious wars raged between them and the Muslims. One or two pillars preserved in the more modern church are, so I was told, relics from an ancient building which has perished.

The annual festival held here in honour of St George attracts a great number of people, who flock to the monastery from considerable distances. It is interesting to observe that the crowds which congregate within the monastery precincts are composed of quite as many Muslims as Christians. Except for the fact that there was no *zikr*, the proceedings were much the same as those of the Muslim festivals described above. The same trading went on, and similar musical and other entertainments were provided. This *mūlid* continues for a week, and during the last few days horse-racing and displays of fancy riding take place. Many of the visitors

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

entertained all the household of Pharaoh." This account suggests that in ancient as in modern times the bride's furniture was conveyed with some ceremony from her parents' house to that of her husband (p. 93); we also see that the ancient like the modern bridegroom used to entertain his male friends on the night of his marriage (p. 93).

It is stated on p. 95 that a sum of money is sometimes paid by the party who applies for a divorce to the other party. That, as can be seen from the ancient marriage-contract translated above, and from those published by Professor Griffith,[1] was the prevailing custom in late Pharaonic and Ptolemaic Egypt. Ancient bills of divorcement are still extant, the earliest dating from the time of Darius, and some of them have been published and translated by Professor Griffith.[2]

It is interesting to observe, in connexion with the modern practice (p. 107) of a mother's attaching a small piece of fox-skin to the head of her last-born living child to ensure her bearing again, that the sign (*ms*), used in writing the verb *msy* (give birth) and its derivatives, consists in well-formed examples of three fox-skins tied together.[3] This suggests that there may have been some association of foxes with fertility in ancient Egypt.

The water used for washing a dead Muslim is brought either from a mosque or from some sacred well or pool connected with a sheikh (p. 109). Similarly, in ancient times the formulæ pronounced while the washing of the corpse took place state that the water has issued from Elephantine, and so is the exudation of Osiris, or that it has been drawn from some sacred pool connected with the sun-cult, or that it is the efflux of the sun-god or the womb of the sky-goddess out of which the god emerged.[4]

That the washer of the corpse may be a *fikīh* (p. 109) shows that this performance still possesses some, though probably quite vague, religious significance.

The utterly uncontrolled grief displayed by the women when

[1] See p. 291, footnote 6.

[2] *Catalogue of the Demotic Papyri in the John Rylands Library*, vol. iii, p. 117.

[3] See A. M. Blackman, *Man*, vol. ix, pp. 9 f.; L. Borchardt, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. xliv, pp. 75 f.; A. Erman, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. xlv, p. 92.

[4] See A. M. Blackman, *Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et l'archéologie égyptiennes*, vol. xxxix, pp. 44 ff.; *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xl, pp. 57–66, 86–91; *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, pp. 117 ff., 157 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

The modern shādūf (pp. 190f.) finds its exact counterpart in

paintings dating from the New Kingdom (Fig. 180). Wooden *shādūf*-hooks, the hooks from which the leather buckets are hung,

FIG. 178. AN ANCIENT PLOUGH
After Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Nakht at Thebes*, Pl. XVIII.

have been found in graves of the Second to Third Dynasties (*c.* 3000 B.C.).[1]

The object now known as *'arūset el-ḳamḥ*, 'the bride of the corn,' is depicted in several Theban tomb-chapels of the Eighteenth Dynasty,[2] and can possibly be traced back to the Old Kingdom in a different form.[3] It is stated on p. 172 that "in some parts of Egypt 'the bride of the corn' is temporarily placed on the heaps of grain

FIG. 179. AN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN PLOUGH IN THE BERLIN MUSEUM
After L. Borchardt, *Priestergräber . . . vom Totentempel des Ne-user-rê*, p. 116.

Ne-user-rê (Leipzig, 1908), pp. 165 ff.; A. Wiedemann, *Das alte Ägypten*, p. 24 and note 3.

[1] W. M. F. Petrie, *Tarkhan*, Part I, Pl. X, 6.

[2] W. S. Blackman, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. viii, pp. 235 ff. and Pls. XXVI–XXIX.

[3] J. Capart, *La mise à mort du dieu en Égypte* (Paris, 1927).

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

after the winnowing is completed, as a charm to secure a good

FIG. 180. ANCIENT SHAWĀDÎF
After A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, Pl. 35, Fig. 1.

harvest the following year." According to several ancient representations of winnowing this object was placed on the winnowing-floor while the winnowers were at work (Fig. 181), and an offering was laid before it consisting either of a vessel of water and dishes containing cakes, etc. (Fig. 182), or of a bowl of water only (Figs. 181 and 183).

FIG 181. ABOVE: 'BRIDE OF THE CORN' ON THE EDGE OF THE WINNOWING-FLOOR. BELOW: SUPPLIES OF FOOD BESIDE THE THRESHING-FLOOR
After W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 177.

I mention (p. 172) that gifts of the first-fruits are bestowed on the *mueddin* of the village mosque, the *zummāreh*-player, the barber, and the *fuḳahā*, besides the deserving poor. This custom finds a parallel in ancient Egypt. In the

a mat, they listen to the *maazún*, or preacher, as he reads them a chapter from the Koran. F 782 796 516

On Sundays the Christian fellaheen attend the interminable Coptic mass. But here worship is more of a family affair, and women take part in the prayers and chants. F C 788

The Moslems do not understand the literary dialect of the Koran, neither do the Christians understand the Coptic language of their mass. All the fellaheen from one end of Egypt to the other speak what is called 'the vulgar tongue', i.e. colloquial Arabic. This is a dialect differing a great deal in its vocabulary from those of Syria and Morocco. In Egypt there is no distinct dialect in this or that province, but only a number of variant words and expressions, and, in the South, a more guttural pronunciation, which betrays the Upper Egyptian. C F 191 198 788

Fasting is strictly observed by the Moslems in Ramadan and by the Copts in Lent. The former during the holy month abstain from all eating and drinking from dawn to sunset. The latter, for about two hundred days of the year, eat nothing from midnight to midday. F C 785 262

Almsgiving is another obligation which the fellaheen do not neglect. Within the limits of their means they fulfil it ungrudgingly, not in money but in kind. They make gifts to the blind, to ministers of religion, and to those poorer than themselves; and this in addition to regular and compulsory presents. F 735 782 431

On the other hand, few fellaheen make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and if they do, it is at the price of heroic sufferings. The happy pilgrim, on his return after six or eight months' absence, bringing blessings from the holy places to his village, is welcomed like one coming back from the dead. His pious achievement marks him out from the rest, and his children share his renown. He is henceforward always addressed by the title of "*Hagg*" and his pilgrimage is commemorated on the walls of his house. On the white-washed front the crude outlines of men, carriages and ships are painted, with his name and the date. The same customs are observed by Coptic fellaheen who have visited Jerusalem, and thus earned the titled of "*Muqaddis*". C F 794 554 [532]

More frequented and more popular than the mosque, because there is no distinction of age or sex, is the tomb of F 778

● 778 the patron saint of the village, who is called 'Sheikh' or 'Wali' or 'Sîdi' So-and-So.

The monument usually stands outside the built-up area, often close to a well or a canal and shaded by trees, which are themselves the objects of veneration. It consists as a rule of a cubical building about twenty feet square, topped by a dome (*qubba*), and whitewashed all over. The sheikh's body does not always lie within. There may be only [782] an empty tomb surrounded by palm branches, candles, shreds of cloth, bits of hair, and harvest offerings. The caretaker of the tomb is maintained by the community, or by the income of a pious foundation (*waqf*). His post is often hereditary.

796 The day of the *mulid*, or anniversary of the holy man, 527 is a great holiday for the villagers. All of them make their way to the holy spot and go through the traditional ceremonies — dances, circuit of the tomb, and incantations (50).

764 The resting-place of the dead is some distance from the homes of the living. The cemetery is always a piece of waste land, unfit for cultivation, on the débris of an abandoned village (*tell* or *kom*), or on the sand below the cliffs at the desert edge. Sometimes, as at Minia, it lies on the other side of the Nile. The village of the dead is made up of separate tombs packed closely one against the other. They may be rectangular cemented blocks with pillars at head and foot, or simply mounds sprinkled all over with white pebbles or marked by two rough stones or a couple of vertical palm branches which are renewed every year. There are no in- [769] scriptions and no flowers, but every family knows where its dead are buried, and comes to visit them on the first day of the Great Bairam, when the whole village goes off to the cemetery to honour the dead and to feast and make holiday [527] over their tombs. On that day the village is as empty and deserted as it is in October, when everyone has gone out to pick the cotton.

361 It is not yet time for us to go inside the village. In 312 artists' pictures of Egyptian villages there is always a pool 311 to reflect the dull mass of houses with its coronet of trees. In reality this pool is a large greenish pond of stagnant 316 water, as poisonous as it is picturesque. Nearly every village has one, almost out of necessity. To build houses, make bricks, engineer a watercourse or strengthen a dyke, local

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

III

THE MUSHĀHARA

THIS is a quantity of stones of different colours, strung together along with a quantity of pieces of silver and gold which are called *masākẖīṭ*. (*Masākẖīṭ* in the technical language of the womenfolk means people on whom the wrath of Allah has alighted for some crime they have committed in the past, and on account of which He has changed [p. 14] their original nature.[1])

The owner of this necklace sees herself possessed of great wealth, because, as she and others like her imagine, it protects a woman during confinement from the misfortune of barrenness, and those afflicted with ophthalmia from the ill-luck of losing an eye. Accordingly you see every barren woman, and everyone afflicted with ophthalmia, having the *mushāhara* brought to them from some place or another, even if the woman's circumstances compel either her mother to pledge her ornaments, or her father to pay out all his money as security for the stones to the owner of the *mushāhara*, lest they should be lost. The strange thing is that so many believe that the life of their sick one depends upon whether the "old woman," who is the owner of the *mushāhara*, hands it over or not.

IV

THE KABBĀS STONE (ḤAGAR AL-KABBĀS)

THIS should rather be called the principal of the *mushāhara*[2] because, whereas the *mushāhara* protects one from falling into

[1] [*Masākẖīṭ* (singular, *maskẖūṭ*) = images. Some of the parts of the above-mentioned conglomerate necklace or *mushāhara*, are in the form of crude images, such as are commonly found in the ruins of antiquity. The popular belief in Egypt was, and still is in some places, that the statues and images of the old Pharaonic times were really the vestiges of ancient infidels whom Allah in His anger had petrified. Tr.]

[2] [i.e., the stone of greatest efficacy in the necklace. Tr.]

harm, this stone rescues one from harm after one has fallen. Both in the case of a confined woman, and also of those afflicted with purulent ophthalmia, it is rubbed and its water drunk.[1] Our experience is that the harm done by the *kabbās* is greater than that done by the rest of its brethren which are strung with it on the cord of absurdities and vanities, because the harm of these is limited to their delaying the patient from calling in a doctor ; but *it* is harmful on account of its rubbing upon the *maḥār* (or mother of pearl shell which is employed), as a result of which hard particles fly off which do not agree with the ailing eye, for when they are put into it the cornea becomes ulcerated. As is obvious, there is extreme danger in this.

V

TREATMENT FOR THOSE AFFLICTED WITH LEPROSY AND SYPHILIS

SELDOM do the people of the villages and the remote places treat themselves properly for the diseases which trouble them. In consequence you see among them people afflicted with leprosy, syphilis and elephantiasis. When these diseases sorely oppress them, they go off to the village of Balkamūna in the Gharbīya Province, where there is to be found a man famous in all the provinces of Lower Egypt, named Al-Ḥāgg Aḥmed. They complain to him of their pain. He immediately uncovers the patient, splits the flesh of his back and extracts from it pieces of the muscles or sinews. He then sprinkles over the wound certain powders, the best known of which is blue

[1] [This last statement requires some elucidation. The *ḥagar-al-kabbās* is a small stone which is rubbed on a mother-of-pearl shell (*maḥāra*) into which drops of water from a *ḳulla*, or earthenware jar, are let fall. This water becomes whitish after a little, and is then drunk by the patient, or in the case of eye-disease, as mentioned above, it is used as an eye-lotion. Hence the injury done by the particles of the shell to the cornea. Miss W. S. Blackman in her book, *The Fellaḥin of Upper Egypt* (p. 203) mentions this " cure " and gives an interesting photographic record. She asserts, however, that it is called *ḥagar eṭ-ṭarfā* (stone of the tamarisk). Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

ISb
808 ●

MOSLEM AMULETS

Two stamped leather amulets of the kind used in Egypt to-day as prophylactics.
(By kind permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.)

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

Ignorant and stupid people are their customers, who ask them to raise the veil from the face of their future lot. This is the procedure: first the man opens the "Book," which will be variegated with florid decorations and bright colours. Next, he gazes intently into the face of the fool sitting before him, and critically examines his appearance and guesses his nature and circumstances. The latter answers him in accordance with what he has divined. For example, he will say to him, "It appears that you are very worried because of poverty and straightened circumstances, nevertheless, cheer up, for your Lord will give you an easy time after this poverty, and in a short while [p. 36] your pockets will be packed tight with money, so that you will be puzzled as to how to spend it." Or he will say to him, "You do not sleep all night long because of thinking, but relief from Allah is at hand, for, verily, He has sent to you one who will endeavour to solve the problem that is before you, and who will save you from it. Only the 'Book' says, that you must pay money and allow me to write a talisman so that your care and grief may vanish, and your affair may be accomplished," and other similar statements.

XV

AMULETS AND TALISMANS

READERS know from what precedes that those who practise bibliomancy, and divination with sand and shells, do not confine themselves to the foregoing which is nothing more than the diagnosis and explanation of troubles, but they lay ambitious claim to a knowledge of the secrets of curing by means of the writing of amulets and talismans[1] to induce love.

Every stupid woman seeks the help of these charlatans on the supposition, say, that her neighbour or her fellow-wife has written against her what will make her husband hate her. So the charlatans write for her some names which are absolutely

[1] [*Aḥgiba* plural of *ḥigāb*.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

without connotation, such as Shamhūrish, Dahinish, and Budūḥ, etc.[1] on a patch of paper in disjointed letters. This clearly demonstrates the way by which they mislead the minds of simpletons. They also order them to burn these as incense with substances known to them, which help, in their opinion, to plant love in the heart. Or they write Rawwāsh ibn Hawwāsh or Zuḥal (i.e. Saturn), etc. [p. 37] in the manner indicated, and then charge them to fumigate them with herring skin at the time when the people concerned cohabit, if the aim be the creation of hatred and dislike between her husband and the woman he loves and desires. And there is no doubt that quacks such as these are a menace to all praiseworthy characteristics and noble customs, chiefly because by their endeavouring to cause a separation, by means of imagination, between a husband and his deluded wife, they obtain access, in the majority of cases, to the circumstances of the family, in a manner that is other than admirable. This they accomplish because during the shell-divining and bibliomancy and amulet-fabrication they learn the name of the woman, and the names of the members of her family, and their deep secrets. As a result, they do all they can to create mischief and ruin.

The writing of amulets in the villages is not undertaken by Moors only, but there are other individuals who have special haunts which are known to the *fellāḥīn*.

In the neighbourhood of Kôm al-Akhḍar in the Buḥaira Province, the reputation of a number of them was spread abroad to the effect that they were able to fabricate amulets and talismans, until the value of one of them was not less than a hundred piastres [a little more than a pound sterling]. They then order the owner of the amulet not to open it, for if he do,

[1] [Names of magic import. Shamhūrish, or its variant, Samhūrish, appears in Islamic angelology as the title of a celestial being. There are many such figures, no doubt of Gnostic, or even earlier, origin. E. Blochet in his *Études sur le Gnosticisme musulmane* (in the *Rivisti degli Studi Orientali*, 1909, p. 719 ff.), identifies him with St. George of the Apocryphal Acts. He says (p. 726) that the name has no meaning either in Hebrew, in Aramaic, or in Greek; so he finds an Iranian parallel. But I would suggest that the word ultimately comes from the Hebrew Shemhammephoresh, i.e., the Ineffable Name of God. As for *Budūḥ*, it is the well-known group of letters often found in Arabic talismanic squares, and still written on envelopes as a prophylactic. The numerical value equals 2468. Tr.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

the effect anticipated from it will depart without avail. For a certain friend, whom I know, they wrote an amulet which did not produce the desired result, in spite of his strict adherence to their wishes. (This was only that Allah might reveal to him their falsehood and wickedness.) It so happened that when this friend was in despair he exercised his skill on the covering of the talisman, which was [p. 38] of lead, until he opened it. When the paper inside it appeared, he found it did not contain anything at all in the way of writing. Yet he did not cease in his mind to place some credence in the soundness of amulets and talismans, for when he saw that the circumstances were such, he was afraid in his mind lest the writing had flown away because he desired an acquaintance with what was inside it, and so he did not stop performing the requirements prescribed to him by the quacks. What added to his hallucination was the fact that he told his case to an ignoramus, led astray like himself, and he began upbraiding him for what he had done, and proved to him that no one dared to do what he had done unless he had been blinded, and the sign-posts of his vision had been effaced.

Let us return to the shell-diviners. These women do not confine themselves merely to enticing people into their nets in the normal way, but they vie with one another in practical "healing." They have thus often been the cause of the setting of the sun of life for many persons of note both men and women. One, whose word I cannot doubt, informed me that he was inhabiting a neighbouring dwelling in which was a girl suffering from chlorosis ("*yellowness*" [sic]) whose mother went to one of the shell-diviners and informed her of her daughter's condition. The "old wife" assured her that a *jinnī* had fallen in love with her daughter, and had entered into every part of her body and was the cause of her complaint.

When our poor friend heard that, she could not resist throwing herself at the feet of the "old wife," beseeching her to take pity and cast out the *jinnī*. After pretending to refuse and put difficulties in the way, the "old wife" at length granted her request, and accompanied her to her dwelling. As soon as she saw the patient [p. 39] she ordered them to bring her half a pound of metallic lead and melt it over a fire. When

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

gence. Ibn Kalada[1] has said: "He who desires to sell his life cheaply let him give a little of his time to fair women."

XVIII

THE 'UḲĀD AND THE KHŪṢA

THE *'Uḳād* is a thread of wool which is tied in seven knots, over each of which a special incantation is pronounced, and it is blown upon by people who are well-known for this "operation." The *Khūṣa* is made of the branches of palm-trees which the patient presents on the morning of some Friday at the instigation of the *Faḳīh*, who receives it and recites over it a number of incantations and protective circular charms (*Taḥāwīṭ*). Both of these are used in the curing of colds and fevers. This is why you see many children with them round their necks, because they are more liable to these two ailments. In the villages a mother is considered negligent of her child if she does not place round its neck an *'Uḳād* of this sort, which will keep him, as she asserts, from illness.

XIX

BARRENNESS ('UḲM)

ONE of the best "remedies" for barrenness is to walk over a person who has been killed. This is a famous old "remedy," even with inhabitants of large towns. It is long since we used to see, when our professors were lecturing on Anatomy in the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī College [p. 45] many ladies coming to the dissecting room in order that they might pass over the dead, with this object in view.

Some women who are barren carry a silique of wool dipped in

[1] [This is Al-Ḥāriṯh ibn Kalada, a contemporary of the Prophet Muḥammad, and at one time a celebrated physician at the court of the Persian King Anūshirwān. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

his having divulged the secret to me that in two days after this, the disease returned to him through imagination, just as it had left him under the same influence.

XXXII

"NECK PAIN" (WAG' AL-RAḲABA)

THIS means either hoarseness of the throat or diseases of the tonsils (lōzatēn). The "old wives" "cure" it in two ways. (1) They make the patient hang round his neck a huge bead of red stones, and (2) they order him to swallow a boiled hen's egg at one gulp without chewing. The harm of this latter method will appear from the story reported by the Egyptian newspapers of date 13th November, 1892, about a youth in the Daḳahlīya [Province] in whose throat the egg stuck and he died shortly after. Perhaps this will be a warning to those who are heedless and restrain them from trusting in the nonsense of the "old wives" and the absurdities of foolish individuals.

XXXIII

WORM EXTRACTORS (DAWWĀDA)

THESE are a community—the Ghagar and Nawar[1]—whose origin is from Syria; some say from China; and some go so far as to say that they are spread all over the world. They claim that they can "cure" children who cry too much, by extracting the worms (*dūd*) from their foreheads, pretending that this is the cause of their continual crying. Dr. Muḥammad Efendī 'Alī Duwaidār relates that a little child of his family was always crying, so the child's parents summoned

[1] [Gypsies and vagrants. See *Encyclopedia of Islam*, under, *Nūrī*. TR.]

5:Blackman E-5 (1923)1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

n73 n76 hanging it round its neck till it is seven years old, after which period it will be immune.

n51 [843] The *ḳarînch* seen by King David was the queen of them all, and the promise she gave is binding on all her subjects. She herself is not, according to my informant, the "double" of any human being; she is by herself, and, like the king of the *afrîts*, lives for ever.

[304] n51 [761] If a woman's children have died one after the other, soon after they were born, when another one arrives she has it tattooed with a small round spot in the centre of the forehead, while a similar spot is tattooed on the left ankle. After this she believes that her *ḳarînch* will not attempt to touch her child.

Apparently, during the notable interview between King David and the queen of the *ḳarînchs* the latter promised him that if a child bore these marks she would not touch him or her.

n76 n53 A *ḳarînch* may do good or evil to a mother's children till they have passed the age of seven years. She only does harm, so I was told, if the mother has been doing something wrong. For instance, if the *ḳarînch* clutches a child by the throat, it means that the child's mother has been ill-tempered, and so on.

A man's *ḳarîn* does not affect his children, it only affects him. If he should lose his temper with his wife or family, or with his friends, or does wrong in any way, and goes to bed unrepentant, he may wake up in the morning and find that some illness has attacked him. This has been caused by his *ḳarîn*. When he is sorry and expressed [n56] repentance, or has called in a magician, who will give him a charm to wear under his left arm, he will be cured.

n76 n53 n55 n78 If a child seems sickly and gets thinner and weaker every day, the mother knows that her *ḳarînch* is trying to draw her child away from her. Various devices are resorted to in order to mitigate this evil. Near a small village in Asyût Province there is a large stone which is called the stone of the Sheikha Fâṭimeh, who is believed to be buried here. If a child is being drawn away by its mother's *ḳarînch*, the mother will take it on a Friday to this stone, near which she will place the child, and she herself [n87] will stay to watch over it. If the child goes to sleep quietly the mother knows that it will recover, but if it cries and refuses to sleep she takes it home again, knowing full well that it will shortly die. I have myself seen a child lying near the stone fast asleep, with its mother sitting close by. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 1.) 1/A.

In a village in Middle Egypt there is an old disused graveyard, crowned by the domed tomb of a celebrated local sheikh. The other graves are now fallen into ruin, and many of them show large, gaping hollows. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 2.) 1/A A woman whose child is affected by her *ḳarînch* will take it and place it in one of these cavities, the results being the same as in the case of the stone of the Sheikha Fâṭimeh.

n55 A child may suffer from a cough, accompanied by gasping, as if it could hardly breathe. It is liable to such an attack at any time till it has passed the age of seven years. To cure it, the mother or grandmother (either paternal or maternal), or a

1/A [See Category 116, Plate facing p. 168 — Analyst]

778
755
[n6A]

FIG. 1.—STONE OF THE SHEIKHA FATIMEH.

FIG. 2.—RUINED GRAVES AT LAHŪN, IN THE APERTURES OF WHICH CHILDREN ARE PLACED WHEN AFFECTED BY THE MOTHER'S ḥarīmeh.

751
843

FIG. 3.—CHARM AND CHARM SQUARE WORN BY AN EXPECTANT MOTHER.

THE KARĪN AND KARĪNEH.

[Facing p. 168]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

5.

539x
782

Prayer to the Prophet.

Ya nabīne, ya sākin Ṭēbe,
u-ʿalēk, ya nabīne, u-ṣallēne.
Yōm el-ʾiyāme išfaʿ fine,
wiššaffaʿ, ya rasūl Alla,
nuṣṣ el-layāli we-ḥakam Alla.

O our Prophet, who dwellest in Ṭēbe,
For thee, O our Prophet, we entreat Allah's blessing.
At the Day of Resurrection speak for us,
And mediate for us, thou messenger of Allah,
At midnight — but Allah's will be done.

1. Ṭēbe is another name for the city of Medīna, in which the Prophet Moḥammed lies buried. [779]
2. That is: "we say: Allah bless Moḥammed and save him".

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

10.

The Well Zemzem.

×539
●778
823

The well Zemzem is the miraculous well in the Mosque of Mekka. Pilgrims drink from it and are accustomed to carry vials of its water home with them. In a very similar song of Dalman's (P. 8; from Ḥawāra in Aglûn in Palestine) the Zemzem well is addressed, but it means a girl. Perhaps our song is also to be thus understood.

Ya bīrî Zemzem, salabik selāsil,
weš-šurbê minnik dawa lim-mesāfir.
Ya bīrî Zemzem salabik ḥarīr,
weš-šurbê minnik dawa lil-ʿalīl.

Thou Zemzem well, thy ropes are like chains,
And to drink from thee is medicine for the traveler.
Thou Zemzem well, thy ropes are like silk,
[757] And to drink from thee is medecine for the sick.

1. 3. This is a draught-well. Its ropes are as strong as chains and as soft as silk.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

86.

A Mighty Helper.

539x
832
[778]

Compare the very similar little song from Cairo, in Lane II p. 81 (hence, of the year 1836)[1]. "He of Embābe" is Shēkh Isma'īn, whose tomb lies in Embābe, near Cairo. In Lane's song the appeal is made to Shēkh Aḥmed of Ṭanṭa (compare No. 8).

Ya-mbābi, yalla, ya-mbābi,
tigma'ni 'ala 'izz aḥbābi!
Win gāni ḥabībi-l-lēle,
la'mil-lo el-kašmīr ḍullēle,
wa'ul-lo: salamāt, ya ḥabībi,
'izz el-layāli el-lēle.

Thou of Embābe, up, thou of Embābe,
Unite me with my best beloved!
And if my beloved comes to me to night,
I will make for her a baldachin of the cashmere shawl,
And say to her: Welcome, my beloved,
This night is the fairest of nights!

4. The couch shall be decked with costly stuffs.

---

[1]) The preceding song in Lane (II p. 81) I also once heard sung, but unfortunately failed to write it down:

Everyone whose eyes are sleeping
Need not think the lover sleeps.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

796 [169] while those who have lost some one dear to them recall him or her to their thoughts, proceed to the cemetery (especially the women), stick a palm branch into the grave mound, distribute pastry and alms, and even pass the night there with their family.

The other feast follows three months after. It is called the Great Feast or Feast of Offering, and lasts for four days, but is really the smaller feast. The baking, cannon-firing, receiving of visitors, embracing, congratulating, and dressing go on as at the little feast; the festive gaiety is, however, dulled, and is not so universal as after the Ramadan. The chief ceremony [782] on this occasion is the eating of "offering flesh" in memory of the offering of Abraham. Every believer *must* have his [262] piece of meat on this day, and anyone who cannot procure it for himself receives it from his richer neighbours, each of whom offers a sheep for every member of his family. The native Christians abstain from flesh on this day out of [988] opposition. This is the most brilliant period of the pilgrimage in Mecca.

FEAST OF THE SAINTS.

796 796 In the middle of the month Shaaban, which precedes Ramadan, is celebrated the great annual jubilee (a kind of wakes), when every town that can claim to have had a saint of any note, having chosen him as its patron, honours his memory by some kind of festive demonstration—the saint having been a man gifted by God with miraculous power, not necessarily on account of great piety, but oftener as a compensation for harmless and innocent imbecility. The [174] ancient Egyptians also had their patrons and protectors, namely, *special divinities or forms and varieties of such for* 796 *particular cities.* In Upper Egypt the chief festival is that [184] of the Sheikh Abder-Rahim at Keneh; it is for Upper Egypt what the celebrated fair at Tantah is for Lower Egypt. The latter is evidently a continuation of the ancient Egyptian feast of Diana at Bubastis, or is analogous to it. From the beginning [778] of the month onwards some bustle prevails round the temple

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

or mausoleum of the sheikh, as the saint is called, booths and tents are erected, and the spot where he is buried is crowded with devout visitors. At night the halls of the mausoleum are lighted up, all the lamps above the tomb being lighted; the citizens crowd to the spot, listen to the reading of the Koran, and give themselves up to the intoxication of the *zikr*, a kind of religious dance which will be described afterwards. Coffee and sherbet are served out in the booths, and dancing-girls, singers, and instrumental performers attract the people, the stalls of the dealers in fruits and confectionery extend far into the city; all the shopkeepers have provided large supplies of goods; foreign traders expose their commodities; the festival assumes the appearance of a fair. The nearer the feast the greater the throng of people that assembles from far and near. Every hour brings more new-comers, many of whom advance in solemn procession, horsemen and flags in front, with drums, musical instruments, and women behind, who express in a melancholy chant their longing regards towards the sainted sheikh, or utter quavers of joy. The flags and the sheep that are dragged along in the procession are intended as offerings for the saint, in fulfilment of a vow made for a prayer granted in the course of the year. When the attendants of the sheikh, as sacrificial priests, have taken as much as they want, the remainder is divided among the struggling people.

At the place where the festival is held boys and youths amuse themselves on a large swing, the smaller and the girls enjoy a kind of see-saw; on the level unused area of the graveyard the equestrian performers go through their manœuvres. Clad in a wide flowing blouse, with the sleeves thrown far back, their feet planted on the broad flat stirrups, as they sit in their saddles that rise into a high pommel before and behind, holding upright in their hands a long pole, these performers ride at full speed, one after the other, from one row of people to the opposite. They display their dexterity by suddenly stopping their flying horses when close beside the frightened crowd, in accomplishing which their pole serves as a support, and by raising the dust in clouds causes their daring to be visible to a distance.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

immense. The town contains twice or thrice as many strangers as inhabitants, and these are all on foot. Camels behung with coloured cloths, ribbons, carpets, and bells, carry the *mahmel* or "ark" of the tutelary saint, which is covered with the grave-cloth embroidered in gold and silver; the main part of this mahmel, a quadrangular wooden frame with a pyramidal top, may be seen at other times on the roof of the sheikh's building. The anniversary of other saints is also occasionally celebrated at the same time, and each has his mahmel. These processions have an unmistakable similarity to those that took place at the clothing of the statues of the ancient Egyptian deities. When the camels are collected the procession starts. The advanced guard is formed by a large number of swift camels, whose riders, sitting upon rich housings, and themselves decked with gay garments, gallop backwards and forwards and display their dexterity. Others show their horses' action, while boys strive to get their donkeys to gallop. Pipers and kettle-drummers head the procession itself. (it is only the military that have drums and trumpets proper), then comes the chorus of day and night watchmen, followed by the Turkish soldiers and police-officials in full regimentals. This armed body keeps up a perpetual fire, loading their old-fashioned guns and pistols to the muzzle. In their midst rides the governor of the province or his representative on a richly caparisoned steed, the procession being joined also, when possible, by a squadron of Bashi Bazouks or irregular troops, and a company of regular troops of the line. The camels with the mahmels, each led by a man, form the middle of the festal procession. Under the frames of the mahmels peep out boys and girls who have been elevated to this blessed seat, either in virtue of their rank, or by the recommendations of their fathers. Before every camel a body of men dance and sing pious odes, hymns and verses of the Koran; gay flags consecrated to the sheikh are carried alongside of the camel. Behind follow more musicians, and after them dancing-girls, who are indispensable even to such pious solemnities, and are believed not to have a disturbing effect upon the devotion appropriate to

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

special dainty on this day. Saturday is named "the Sabbath of the light," from the celebrated sacred fire, which on this day bursts forth in the Greek Church of the Sepulchre at Jerusalem, and on this account the Christian brethren there annually get up a spectacle, which often terminates in deadly blows and renders the intervention of the Turkish, and consequently Mohammedan soldiery necessary. On this day the Mohammedan faithful strengthen their eyes with eye-powders; everybody has a vein opened, or gets himself cupped, a custom which prevails in many places in the West also, and in Egypt, Mohammedan as it is, coloured Easter eggs are also eaten. People take *kishk*, that is, a decoction of wheat with sourmilk, boil it with eggs, and stick it with the coloured shells of the eggs above the doors to adorn the entrance for all time coming and ward off spirits. On Easter Sunday the "great feast of the Christians" (*id en-nusdra*) these hold a grand reception, with sherbet and holiday gifts, the Mohammedans in a friendly and neighbourly way call upon the Christians as the latter did upon them during Bairam. The Easter Monday of the Copts, whose festivals are settled by the Greek calendar, is the universal spring festival for the adherents of both religions. The night before onions, beans, and a bouquet of roses are laid under the bed-cushions and slept upon. On Easter Monday the onions are crushed and stuck with some water on the door; the beans are stuck on the bar, and the roses are used as a nosegay. At the first streak of daylight everybody moves abroad, this being the day of *shimm en-nesim*, that is, "air-smelling," or more poetically "sipping the zephyr." People go to the gardens or other attractive spots, and pass, if possible, the whole day there. At the most-frequented places sellers of coffee, sherbet, buza, and cooked meats establish themselves. A company of friends may take an Easter lamb with them, kill it at the rendezvous they have selected, and prepare *tanur*, that is, they cut up the meat in several pieces and bake it in an improvised earth-oven; or they make *shauirma*, that is, the whole lamb with the skin and hair on is placed on a spit and roasted at the fire. The day is spent